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ABSTRACT

This study consists of an analysis of suspension patterns; a description of inhouse suspension programs; perceptions of secondary principals, teachers, and students about discipline in the schools; perceptions of the community about suspension and discipline policies; a review of the district's human relations program; an examination of student handbooks; and general recommendations and possible alternatives to current practices. Among the conclusions and recommendations are that a significant number of suspensions are for minor offenses that are nondisruptive, that the suspension rate for black students is clearly disproportionate to their numbers in the school system, that inhouse suspension programs are perceived as the clearest and quickest way to decrease discipline problems, that suspension should be used sparingly because of its disruption to the individual's education, and that regularly scheduled and planned communication sessions should be maintained and continued between minority group representatives and various levels of the school administration. (Author/IRT)

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DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

In the

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Study by the
Florida School Desegregation
Consulting Center
University of Miami,
Coral Gables, Florida

Dr. Gordon Foster, Director

April 1, 1977

EA 010 044

DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

In the

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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DISCIPLINE PRACTICES IN THE
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Since the desegregation of schools in Hillsborough County in 1971, a number of studies have been undertaken in regard to student discipline and the continuing problem of disruptive behavior in the Tampa Schools. In the 1974-75 school year a subcommittee of the Hillsborough County Citizens' Advisory Committee which had been charged with studying school violence and student suspensions made a report and several recommendations to the School Board (Appendix A). The subcommittee recommended (1) an expanded reading program for children with low reading skills; (2) an expanded and improved human relations program; (3) compulsory inservice training for teachers and administrators in interpersonal relations and cultural differences; (4) an inschool suspension program; (5) an expansion of the alternative school program for disruptive youth; and (6) an investigation of suspension and expulsion policies by the Board. As a result of this report the Board requested the Citizens' Advisory Committee to conduct a study on student suspensions in 1975-76, which was later changed to a study on the problems of disruptive youth.

In the meantime a complaint was lodged in March, 1975, with the Atlanta branch of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, requesting an investigation of the Hillsborough Schools for possible racial discrimination in suspension policies and practices. The Board provided OCR with a detailed report of their then current disciplinary practices, an on-site review was made by OCR staff members, and in December, 1975, OCR

asked that the Board provide an affirmative action plan to alleviate certain areas of concern found in the OCR review and analysis (Appendix B). A series of negotiations ensued between the Board and the OCR office in Atlanta, and an affirmative action plan was submitted. The Board took a stand not to tolerate any discriminatory practices in disciplinary matters, and procedures were established for regular meetings to be held between school officials and representatives from the black community.

In April, 1976, the Hillsborough County Citizens' Advisory Committee requested assistance from the Florida School Desegregation Consulting Center in the form of a study on disciplinary policies and practices; this request was supported by Dr. Raymond Shelton, Superintendent of Schools (Appendix C).

In the time since the current study was undertaken, many changes have occurred in the Hillsborough County Schools; some of the components covered in this report have already been reviewed and actions initiated by the school system. However, that does not detract from the importance of the report. Additional changes and activities may emerge, so the report will serve to document needs and problems that the schools have moved to correct as well as some that may still need attention.

The report is purposely not written in a typical research manner, but to be useful to school practitioners. It is based on information collected for the study or provided from Hillsborough County reports, and generalizations are based on samples of information; it was neither practical nor possible to obtain data from

all sources. Emphasis was placed on activities at the junior and senior high school levels.

One basic assumption reflected in the study is that if people perceive something to be a certain way, then it is that way to those people. The perception may or may not accurately reflect the "facts"; but to those who see it that way, it is true. Thus, this study relied for much of its data on perceptions of different role groups about what was happening in the schools; school personnel should be able to use parts of this information as a basis for future decisions or for seeing that communications about school activities are better understood by all those participating in the educational enterprise.

The study consisted of several components: (1) an analysis of suspension patterns, (2) the inhouse suspension program, (3) perceptions of secondary principals about discipline in the schools, (4) perceptions of secondary classroom teachers about discipline in the schools, (5) perceptions of secondary students about discipline in the schools, (6) perceptions of the community about suspensions and discipline policies, (7) a review of the human relations program, (8) student handbooks, and (9) general recommendations and possible alternatives.

An Analysis of Suspension Patterns

Yearly Trends in Incidents of Suspension

There has been a considerable reduction in the number of student suspensions recorded between the 1973 - 74 school year and the 1975 - 76 school year (Table I). There were 1,295 fewer suspensions

TABLE I

YEARLY COMPARISONS OF SUSPENSIONS
1973-74, 1974-75, and 1975-76

Year	Level	Total Suspensions
1973 - 74	Elem.	367
1974 - 75	Elem.	327
1975 - 76	Elem.	208
1973 - 74	JHS	4415
1974 - 75	JHS	5122
1975 - 76	JHS	4221
1973 - 74	Sr. HS	5367
1974 - 75	Sr. HS	3405
1975 - 76	Sr. HS	3703

Total By Year	
1973 - 74	10,149
1974 - 75	8,854
1975 - 76	8,132

Decreases (Totals)	N	%
73-74 to 74-75:	1295	12.76
74-75 to 75-76:	722	8.15
73-74 to 75-76:	2017	19.87

in 1974 - 75 than in 1973 - 74 and 722 less in 1975 - 76 than in 1974 - 75. Put another way, the number dropped from 10,149 in 1973 - 74 to 8,132 in 1975 - 76 approximately a 20 per cent decline.

Not surprisingly, there were few suspensions in elementary schools compared to junior and senior high schools. There has been a substantial decline in senior high school suspensions between 1973 - 74 (5367) and 1975 - 76 (3703). Junior high suspensions have been relatively consistent over the years reported.

Total suspensions in the school year 1975 - 76 by instructional level, sex and race are given in Table 2. There were 3590 suspensions

TABLE 2

SUSPENSIONS BY INSTRUCTIONAL LEVEL, SEX, AND RACE
1975 - 76

	Males		Females		TOTAL
	Black	White	Black	White	
Elementary	112 (54%)	56 (27%)	30 (15%)	9 (4%)	207
Junior H.S.	1209 (29%)	1602 (38%)	648 (15%)	762 (18%)	4221
Senior H.S.	1087 (29%)	1508 (41%)	504 (14%)	604 (16%)	3703
TOTAL	2408 (30%)	3166 (39%)	1182 (14%)	1375 (17%)	8131

Black - White Totals

	Total Black	Total White
Elementary	142 (69%)	65 (31%)
Junior H.S.	1857 (44%)	2364 (56%)
Senior H.S.	1591 (43%)	2112 (57%)
TOTAL	3590 (44%)	4541 (56%)

of black students (44% of the total), as compared to 4541 suspensions of white students (56%). A total number of 5574 male students were suspended (69% of the total), as compared to 2557 female students (31%). When these data are evaluated it is easily observed that a racial and sexual imbalance exists in the suspension rates; that is, black males are much more likely to be suspended than any of the other sex-race categories and males are much more likely to be suspended than females. The figures in Table 4 illustrate the imbalance. Assuming a situation where numbers of students would be suspended in exact proportion to their race and sex 9% black males, 9% black females 41% white females, and 41% white males would have been suspended to make up the actual 8131 suspension total. In practice, black males were suspended at over 3 times this rate, (30% to 9%) and black females at close to double the theoretical rate (14% to 9%).

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF ACTUAL AND THEORETICAL*
SUSPENSION RACES BY RACE AND SEX (1975-76)

	Black Male	Black Female	White Male	White Female
Actual	2408 (30%)	1182 (14%)	3166 (39%)	1375 (17%)
Theoretical	754 (9%)	755 (9%)	3311 (41%)	3311 (41%)

* Based on 18% Black student population (18.6% actual) and an assumed 50% male - 50% female distribution.

White males were at approximately the expected ratio (39% to 41%) while white females were at less than half the theoretical rate (17% to 41%).

Internal Analysis of Selected Sampling of Schools

An internal analysis of suspensions in 1975-76 in a sample of six secondary schools reveals the complicated nature of the suspension figures. Of these 12.8% were black males, and 11% were black females for a total of 24% black. The same school had a total of 1806 referrals; the percentage was 17.4 for black males and 15.8 for black females, or a total of 33.2%. Of the 509 names which showed up on the suspension report, 59 of these individuals were classified as "chronic" (i.e., they had been referred 8 or more times in one year). Of these 22% were black males and 23.7% were black females for a total 45.7% black. Of the 1806 referrals, 682 were for the "chronic" discipline cases. Of these 682 referrals, 28.4% were black males and 22% were black females. Thus, a total of 50.4% of all "chronic" referrals were black students.

This pattern reveals that the percentage of blacks on the suspension report (23.8%) was only slightly greater than the percentage of blacks in the average school. Additional analysis shows that the percentage of blacks increases (1) in relation to the number of referrals, (2) in relation to the "chronic" discipline cases, and (3) in relation to the number of referrals for these chronic cases. This pattern also occurs in the other schools and is summarized below.

For School B there were 60 names on the suspension report and of those 11.7% were black males and 25% were black females, for a total of 36.7% black. There was a total of 7 names for "chronic" discipline problems (8 or more referrals), and of these 28.6% were black males and 42.9% were black females, or 71.5% black. There was

TABLE 4

ANALYSES OF SUSPENSION REPORTS (1975-76) FROM SIX SCHOOLS BASED ON NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SUSPENDED, NUMBER OF ALL REFERRALS, AND NUMBER OF "CHRONIC" OFFENDERS (8 OR MORE TIMES).

School	Category	(1) Total Number of Entries	(2) Number With 7 Or Less Referrals	(3) Number With More Than 7 Referrals	(4) Total Number Of Referrals	(5) Total of Referrals By Col. 2 Students	(6) Total of Referrals By Col. 3 Students	Percentages				Percentages (Internal to Column)			
								Cols. 2 of 1	Cols. 3 of 1	Cols. 5 of 4	Cols. 6 of 4	Col. 1 % of Total	Col. 3 % of Total	Col. 4 % of Total	Col. 6 % of Total
A	B. Male	65	52	13	315	121	194	80%	20%	38.4%	61.6%	12.8%	22%	17.4%	28.4%
	B. Fem.	56	42	14	286	136	150	75%	25%	47.5%	52.4%	11%	23.7%	15.8%	22%
	W. Male	202	182	20	707	492	215	90%	9.9%	69.6%	30.4%	39.7%	33.9%	38.6%	31.5%
	W. Fem.	156	147	9	409	319	90	94.2%	5.8%	78%	22%	30.6%	15.3%	22.6%	13.2%
	L. Male	13	12	1	32	24	8	92.3%	7.7%	75%	25%	2.5%	1.7%	1.8%	1.2%
	L. Fem.	17	15	2	57	32	25	88.2%	11.8%	56.1%	43.9%	3.3%	3.4%	3.2%	3.7%
	TOTALS	509	450	59	1806	1124	682								
B	B. Male	7	5	2	70	42	28	71.4%	28.6%	60%	40%	11.7%	28.6%	26.8%	31.5%
	B. Fem.	15	12	3	69	25	44	80%	20%	36.2%	63.8%	25%	42.9%	26.4%	49.4%
	W. Male	11	11	0	33	33	0	100%	-	100%	-	18.3%	-	12.6%	-
	W. Fem.	25	23	2	80	63	17	92%	8%	78.8%	21.3%	41.7%	28.6%	30.7%	19.1%
	L. Male	1	1	0	7	7	0	100%	-	100%	-	1.7%	-	2.7%	-
	L. Fem.	1	1	0	2	2	0	100%	-	100%	-	1.7%	-	.8%	-
	TOTALS	60	53	7	261	172	89								
C	B. Male	55	43	12	252	112	140	78.2%	21.8%	44.4%	55.6%	23.8%	29.3%	26.4%	30%
	B. Fem.	14	11	3	84	44	40	78.5%	21.4%	52.4%	47.6%	6.1%	7.3%	8.8%	8.6%
	W. Male	112	97	15	359	219	140	86.6%	13.4%	61%	39%	48.5%	36.6%	37.6%	30%
	W. Fem.	47	37	10	246	109	137	78.7%	21.3%	44.3%	55.7%	20.3%	24.4%	25.7%	29.3%
	L. Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	L. Fem.	3	2	1	15	5	10	66.6%	33.3%	33.3%	66.7%	1.3%	2.4%	1.6%	2.1%
	TOTALS	231	190	41	956	489	467								

TABLE 4 (Cont.)

ANALYSES OF SUSPENSION REPORTS (1975-76) FROM SIX SCHOOLS BASED ON NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SUSPENDED, NUMBER OF ALL REFERRALS, AND NUMBER OF "CHRONIC" OFFENDERS (8 OR MORE TIMES).

School	Category	(1) Total Number of Entries	(2) Number With 7 Or Less Referrals	(3) Number With More Than 7 Referrals	(4) Total Number Of Referrals	(5) Total of Referrals By Col. 2 Students	(6) Total of Referrals By Col. 3 Students	Percents				Percents (Internal to Column)			
								Cols. 2 of 1	Cols. 3 of 1	Cols. 5 of 4	Cols. 6 of 4	Col. 1 % of Total	Col. 3 % of Total	Col. 4 % of Total	Col. 6 % of Total
D	B. Male	117	60	57	1177	222	955	51.3%	48.7%	18.9%	81.1%	23.1%	46%	40.5%	53.1%
	B. Fem.	72	52	20	461	166	295	72.2%	27.8%	36%	64%	14.2%	16.1%	15.9%	16.4%
	W. Male	208	170	38	912	475	437	81.7%	18.3%	52.1%	47.9%	41.1%	30.6%	31.4%	24.3%
	W. Fem.	72	69	3	222	171	51	95.8%	4.2%	77%	23%	14.2%	2.4%	7.6%	2.8%
	L. Male	30	24	6	116	55	61	80%	20%	47.4%	52.6%	5.9%	4.8%	4%	3.4%
	L. Fem.	7	7	0	17	17	0	100%	-	100%	-	1.4%	-	.6%	-
	TOTALS	506	382	124	2905	1106	1799								
E	B. Male	89	75	14	342	202	140	84.3%	15.7%	59.1%	40.9%	21.2%	73.7%	32.8%	76.5%
	B. Fem.	48	48	0	101	101	0	100%	-	100%	-	11.5%	-	9.7%	-
	W. Male	183	178	5	437	394	43	97.3%	2.7%	90.1%	9.9%	43.7%	26.3%	41.9%	23.5%
	W. Fem.	68	68	0	103	103	0	100%	-	100%	-	16.3%	-	9.9%	-
	L. Male	21	21	0	42	42	0	100%	-	100%	-	5%	-	4%	-
	L. Fem.	10	10	0	19	19	0	100%	-	100%	-	2.4%	-	1.8%	-
	TOTALS	419	400	19	1044	861	183								
F	B. Male	31	23	8	149	74	75	74.2%	25.8%	49.7%	50.3%	11.7%	28.6%	17.7%	32.2%
	B. Fem.	74	62	12	284	217	67	83.8%	16.2%	76.4%	23.6%	27.9%	42.9%	33.7%	28.8%
	W. Male	58	53	5	197	142	55	91.4%	8.6%	72.1%	27.9%	21.9%	17.9%	23.4%	23.6%
	W. Fem.	92	89	3	185	149	36	96.7%	3.3%	80.5%	19.5%	34.7%	10.7%	21.9%	15.5%
	L. Male	6	6	0	14	14	0	100%	-	100%	-	2.3%	-	1.7%	-
	L. Fem.	4	4	0	14	14	0	100%	-	100%	-	1.5%	-	1.7%	-
	TOTALS	265	237	28	843	610	233								

a total of 261 referrals, with 26.8% being black males and 26.4% black females, for a total of 53.2% black. There were 89 total referrals for the "chronic" discipline cases and of these, 31.5% were black males and 49.4% were black females, for a total 80.9%.

In School C there were 231 names on the suspension report. Of this number, 23.8% were black males and 6.1% were black females for a total of 29.9% black. There were 41 students classified as "chronic" discipline cases with 8 or more referrals. Of these 29.3% were black males and 7.3% were black females, for a total of 36.6% black. There were a total of 956 referrals in School C; 26.4% were black males with 8.8% black females for a total of 35.2% black. There were 467 referrals of "chronic" discipline cases; of these 30.0% were black males and 8.6% were black females for a total of 38.6% black.

In School D there were 506 names listed on the suspension report; 23.1% were black males, and 14.2% were black females, for a total of 37.3% black. There were 124 names of students who were "chronic" problems with 8 or more referrals. Of these, 46% were black males and 16.1% were black females, for a total of 62.1% black. There were 2905 total referrals, with 40.5% black males and 15.9% black females, for a total of 56.4% black. One thousand, seven hundred, and ninety-nine (1799) of these referrals were attributed to the "chronic" discipline cases, and of these 53.1% were black males and 16.4% were black females, for a total of 69.5% black.

In School E there were 419 names on the suspension report. Of these 21.2% were black males and 11.5% were black females for a total of 32.7% black. Nineteen (19) of these students were "chronic"

discipline cases and 73.7% of these were black males (there were no black females) for a total of 73.7% black. There were 1044 total referrals, with 32.8% being black males and 9.7% being black females for a total of 42.5% black. Of these 1044 referrals, 183 were attributed to the "chronic" discipline cases, and 76.5% of all chronic referrals were attributed to black males (there were no black females).

School F listed 265 individual names on the suspension report with 11.7% black males and 27.9% black females for a total of 39.6% black. Of these, 28 were "chronic" offenders with 28.6% black males and 42.9% black females for a total of 71.5% black. There were 843 referrals in School F, with 17.7% being black males and 33.7% being black females for a total of 51.4% black. There were 233 referrals attributed to the "chronic" discipline cases; 32.2% were black males and 28.8% were black females for a total of 61% black.

These composite figures suggest that while the number of names appearing on a particular school's suspension report may not vary widely from the average percentage between blacks and whites in the district, the minority students are more often likely to be repeaters or "chronic" discipline cases, and therefore more likely to be suspended. Certain youngsters, and more likely minority youngsters, are identified as chronic troublemakers and these account for a large percentage of the referrals and suspensions.

With the percentage of black students as just over 18, it is possible that the few black students who seemed to be the "chronic" discipline cases (those with 8 or more referrals in a given year) were more visible to the teachers and school administrators than

their white counterparts. Once a student gets labeled as a troublemaker, it is probably that teachers and administrators are subconsciously watching for that student and that student's behavior. If the student is black in a situation where approximately 1 out of 5 students are black, it is easier for that student to stand out than in a situation where the races are more evenly distributed.

Suspension by Type of Offense

A breakdown of student suspensions (1975-76) is presented in Table 5 by categories identified as "subjective" and "objective," and as "serious" and "nonserious." The division of suspension offenses into these categories was, in itself, somewhat subjective, but the rationale is as follows. Some offenses are quite obvious (objective) in that the data are "hard" (i.e., the student has something in his possession or has been observed in an act which is not especially open to interpretation). Serious offenses are those which, if done off school grounds, are likely to draw attention of other authorities such as police. Examples of serious offenses include: alcohol, assault, drugs, possession of weapons, theft or extortion, and vandalism. Examples of "objective" offenses include: alcohol, assault, drugs, fighting, possession of weapons, smoking violations, tardiness, trespassing, truancy, and vandalism. Using this breakdown, the subjective offenses become: disobedience, disruptive or disrespectful behavior, obscenity or profanity, threats, and the like.

Suspensions in both junior high schools and senior high schools are analyzed in terms of ethnic groups (black, white, Latin)

TABLE 5

TYPE OF OFFENSE (SERIOUS/NON-SERIOUS; OBJECTIVE/ SUBJECTIVE) FOR SUSPENSIONS OF JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS BY STUDENT RACE AND SEX (1975-76)

		Serious		Non-Serious			% 1 of 5	% 3 of 5	Objective		Subjective			% 6 of 10	% 8 of 10
		1	2	3	4	5			6	7	8	9	10		
		N	%	N	%	TOT	%	%	N	%	N	%	TOT	%	%
JHS	B	280	42	1577	41	1857	15	85	804	36	1053	46	1857	43	57
	W	350	53	2014	52	2364	15	85	1300	58	1064	46	2364	55	45
	L	29	5	250	7	279	10	90	121	6	158	8	279	43	57
	M	423	64	2584	67	3007	14	86	1441	65	1566	69	3007	48	52
	F	236	36	1257	33	1493	16	84	784	35	709	31	1493	53	47
Total		659		3841		4500	15	85	2225		2275		4500	49	51
HS	B	164	42	1427	40	1591	10	90	831	34	760	51	1591	52	48
	W	212	55	1900	53	2112	10	90	1450	59	662	44	2112	69	31
	L	10	3	233	7	243	4	96	169	7	74	5	243	70	30
	M	327	85	2429	68	2756	12	88	1695	67	1061	71	2756	62	38
	F	59	15	1131	32	1190	5	95	775	33	415	29	1190	65	35
Total		386		3560		3946	10	90	2450		1496		3946	62	38
JHS	BM	209	32	1000	26	1209	17	83	524	24	685	30	1209	43	57
	WM	191	29	1411	37	1602	12	88	830	37	772	34	1602	52	48
	BF	71	11	577	15	648	11	89	280	13	368	16	648	43	57
	WF	159	24	603	16	762	21	79	470	21	292	13	762	62	38
	LM	23	3	173	5	196	12	88	87	4	109	5	196	44	56
	LF	6	1	77	2	83	7	93	34	2	49	2	83	41	59
Total		659		3841		4500	15	85	2225		2275		4500	49	51
HS	BM	137	35	950	27	1087	13	87	607	25	480	32	1087	56	44
	WM	180	47	1328	37	1508	12	88	988	40	520	35	1508	66	34
	BF	27	7	477	13	504	5	95	224	9	280	19	504	34	66
	WF	32	8	572	16	604	5	95	462	19	142	9	604	76	24
	LM	10	3	151	4	161	6	94	100	4	61	4	161	62	38
	LF	0	0	82	2	82	0	100	69	3	13	1	82	84	16
Total		386		3560		3946	10	90	2450		1496		3946	62	38
	B	444	42	3004	41	3448	13	87	1635	35	1813	48	3448	47	53
	W	562	54	3914	53	4476	13	87	2750	59	1726	46	4476	61	39
	L	39	4	483	7	522	7	93	300	6	222	6	522	57	43
	M	750	72	5013	68	5763	13	87	3136	70	2627	70	5763	54	46
	F	295	28	2388	32	2683	11	89	1559	30	1124	30	2683	58	42
Total		1045		7401		8446	12	88	4685		3761		8446	56	44
	BM	346	33	1950	26	2296	15	85	1131	24	1165	31	2296	49	51
	WM	371	36	2739	37	3110	12	88	1818	39	1292	34	3110	58	42
	BF	98	9	1054	14	1152	9	91	504	11	648	17	1152	44	56
	WF	191	18	1175	16	1366	14	86	932	20	434	12	1366	68	32
	LM	33	3	324	4	357	9	91	187	4	170	5	357	52	48
	LF	6	1	159	2	165	4	96	113	2	52	1	165	68	32
Total		1045		7401		8446	12	88	4685		3761		8446	55	45

and sex in Table 5. Other analyses show suspensions in terms of sex and ethnic detail (black male, white male, black female, white female, Latin male, Latin female). Additionally, totals are shown for junior and senior high schools by race and sex and by the more detailed analyses. In reviewing these tables, it should be remembered that blacks make up approximately 18.6% of the student body.

In junior high school, 804 of the 2,225 "objective" suspensions (36%) were received by blacks, 58% were received by whites, and 6% by Latins; 65% were received by males and 35% by females. Of the "subjective" suspensions, approximately 1053 of 2,275 were received by blacks, or about 46%. Approximately 46% were received by white students, and 8% by Latin students; 69% were received by male students and 31% by female students. Of the serious offenses, 280 of 659 or 42% were received by blacks, 53% by whites, and 5% by Latins; 64% were received by males and 36% by females. Of the nonserious offenses blacks made up 1577 of the total of 3841 or 41%, whites 52%, and Latins 7%; males made up 67% and females 33% of the total.

These relationships were approximately the same in senior high school where blacks were suspended 831 times out of 2450 or 34%, whites 59%, and Latins 7%; males made up 67% and females 33% of the objective offenses. For subjective offenses blacks were suspended 760 out of 1496 times or 51%, whites 44%, and Latins 5%; males made up 71% and females 29% of the total. For serious offenses blacks were suspended 164 out of 386 times or 42%, whites 55%, and Latins 3%; males made up 85% and females 15% of the total. For the nonserious offenses blacks were suspended 1427 times out of 3560 or 40%, whites

53%, and Latins 7%; males made up 68% and females 32% of the total.

Further analysis of all suspensions in secondary schools shows that blacks received 35% of the objective suspensions, whites received 59%, and Latins received 6% ales received 67% and females received 33%. Of the subjective suspensions, blacks received 48% and females received 30%.

This pattern shows quite clearly that, given the distribution of students in the schools, there is an inordinate number of black suspensions for the "subjective" offenses. However, this inordinate balance also is reflected in the other categories of offenses as well, and is even more striking when comparison is made between males and females. Where administrators basically have the discretionary or administrative responsibility for determining suspensions, we find blacks with 48% of the subjective offenses while whites have only 46% of the total. The balance is slightly less pointed with the objective offenses (35% black and 59% white), more closely resembling the black-white ratio of pupils.

Summary

Suspensions show a decreasing trend in the Hillsborough County Schools following a peak reached after the implementation of desegregation. For whatever reasons, the disproportionate number of black and particularly black male suspensions continues; in 1975-76 the ratio of blacks suspended was two and one-half times their representation in the student population. The rate of suspension for blacks is clearly greater for subjective types of offenses where administrative discretion is involved. Further, blacks are more

likely to be repeaters or chronic discipline cases.

The Inschool Suspension Program

Three schools in Hillsborough County have used an inschool suspension program. A structured but informal interview was held with the principal of each of the schools participating in this pilot program. The following questions guided the interviews:

1. What process of dicipline was used? Offenses leading to suspensions?
2. How much time did students spend in suspension?
3. Does the inschool suspension program increase the number of suspensions?
4. How are students counted in suspension reports?
5. What are the good points of inschool suspension?
6. What are the disadvantages of inschool suspension?
7. What suggestions or recommendations would you make on discipline?

Greco Junior High School

Greco is located in Temple Terrace near the University of South Florida. The 1400-student body comes from an upper socio-economic class population with about 50% of the parents' being in professions. Approximately 24% of the students are black and 5% are Spanish surnamed. The 13-year-old building has self-contained classrooms and one class for the deaf. There are 68 faculty members with a bilingual principal.

The majority of Greco's black students are bused from the non-contiguous inner city area of Tampa. One bus load of white students from the community of Thonotosassa also is bused to Greco.

Although the pilot program for inschool suspensions was cut from the 1976-77 county budget, the principal talked with teachers who agreed to giving up their conference times so that the program could continue this year. Every effort was made last year to keep all suspended students in school. The maximum time for a student on inschool suspension was 12 days; although many were given 3 to 5 days, the average time was 7 to 8 days.

In 1975-76 one teacher spent the entire day supervising the school suspension program but this changed this year in light of the budget cut and teachers' volunteering their conference time. The principal had worked in Robinson High School's inschool suspension program, then instigated a similar program two years ago for Greco.

The principal estimated that 10% of the total student population were involved in suspensions with a high number of repeaters, especially from the black students bused from the inner city and the white students bused from Thonotosassa. The majority of black students usually were suspended for being tardy or disrespectful of authority, whereas white students usually were suspended for breaking rules (e.g., possession of marijuana, truancy, or smoking). The principal reported a high incidence of black repeaters as the reason for the school's 50-50 black-white suspension rate; the estimated male-female suspension rate for Greco was 50-50.

A disadvantage stated by the principal was that supervision of the inschool suspension all day by one teacher made it very boring. Another disadvantage was that certain subjects such as art or music are not conducive to individual work assignments for students on inschool

suspension.

Jefferson Senior High School

Jefferson is a new open-space, team-teaching facility with a young faculty of 103 people and an experienced black principal who opened the school four years ago. The faculty's black-white ratio is 13-87. The school houses grade 10-12, has an enrollment of 1900 students this year, and is located along the expressway near the airport. In general the neighborhood is lower-middle class but cuts across all socio-economic classes. The school is on the edge of a neighborhood of upper middle-class blacks.

The student population is approximately 24% black and 22% Hispanic. Academic achievement at Jefferson is in the middle range of Hillsborough County high schools. Approximately 28% of Jefferson's graduates begin college.

Jefferson High does not "track" students although a program (SIMS) was initiated to help incoming tenth graders who had a record of low achievement in science, English, math, and social studies as well as a history of behavioral problems. Approximately 40% of the students identified for SIMS were black. The program follows an interdisciplinary, team-teaching model with a pupil-teacher ratio of 20 to 1. At the end of the year in tenth grade the students move into the regular program. Follow-up studies indicated that the SIMS students, who had entered Jefferson with records of misbehavior, had no higher rates of suspensions in 11th and 12th grade than the total population. SIMS students also experienced success in academic programs.

A program called COPING, a spin-off from the idea of "coping" as express in Future Shock, is provided for 11th and 12th graders. Students are assigned to the program which is interdisciplinary and similar to SIMS. Approximately 20% of these students are black which is about the same as the 18.6% black ratio for the entire school population.

Jefferson High School operated an inschool suspension program for two years but funding was cut by the county this year. Inschool suspension was used only for minor offenses such as excessive tardiness or absences. The rate of attendance for school increased from 89% the first year to 92% last year. Last year the deans made 800 suspensions with 150 being off-campus for serious offenses. Approximately 90% of the suspensions were for one day with a three-day suspension being a rarity. Suspension of males and females was equal; the black-white ratio of suspensions was 35-65 which is slightly disproportionate to the ratio of the total student body.

Although a few students were chronic repeaters the majority of students were not. Students had options of inschool or off-campus suspension at Jefferson. Inschool suspension of students was delayed 24 hours to allow teachers to make assignments to be completed during the suspension. Teachers support the inschool suspension program since it replaces the staying-after-school program to make up work.

The principal is committed to the inschool suspension program and efforts were being made to replace the one teacher cut from the budget, who ran the inschool suspension program. He also sees SIMS as

a preventive program which attempted to change student behavior and reduce the high incidence of black student suspensions which occur in other schools. Coupled with the fact that black students came from a contiguous neighborhood and single family dwellings the SIMS and COPING programs could be significant factors worthy of in-depth study.

Robinson Senior High School

Robinson is one of Hillsborough County's established and formerly all-white high schools. Located near MacDill Air Force Base, the main building is 17 years old but completion of an addition took Robinson off split sessions for 1976-77. The student population is 2,350 with a black-white ratio of 22-78. The majority of black students are bused to Robinson from the noncontiguous inner city of Tampa. The black-white ratio of faculty is about the same as other high schools in Hillsborough County.

Robinson had the county's first inschool suspension program in 1972-73, but the program was cut in the budget crunch last spring; the principal said that the program is "down the drain" this year. Inschool suspensions accounted for 2/3 to 3/4 of all offenses; out-of-school suspensions were meted out to hard-core repeaters, usually for fighting. Inschool suspensions were the same as for any suspension, 1 to 5 days. The average number of students on inschool suspention was 5 to 6 with a maximum of 12 to 13 at any given time. Teachers made assignments for suspended students, and no one teacher stayed all day with suspended students. Teachers were alternated to prevent boredom; several teachers had as part of their teaching assignments supervision of the inschool suspension program. Approxi-

mately 2/3 of the suspensions were male students and 50% of all suspensions were blacks.

The principal believes that the high percentage of black students suspended is a result of the high incidence of suspensions of students bused from the inner city. He believes that these students are on their own because of a need to survive the "street-life" environment of their home community, whereas most other students at Robinson come from homes of parents in the military, who are in military-related occupations, or who are retired military. Usually these students do not challenge authority as do inner-city students.

The principal also stated that a small group of black students living in Port Tampa attend Robinson. Any problem with a black student from Port Tampa usually is corrected by simply contacting the home.

Summary

It appears from these interviews and from substantive data available that inschool suspension is a useful alternative to out-of-school suspension. Principals who have worked with it believe that it accomplishes its purposes and, specifically, that it keeps youngsters in school and under supervision so that they can progress with their work. Also, students and faculty identified the inschool suspension program as a workable alternative to regular suspension. While students and faculty indicated that there were certainly just causes for some suspensions, they perceived that there probably were too many out-of-school suspensions. Those respondents felt that the inschool suspension program would be particularly useful when there could be involvement

of parents, parent conferences, or other ways in which the parent could be made aware of the fact that the student was in an inschool suspension situation, and that continued bad behavior could lead to out-of-school suspensions.

Data Comparing Inschool and Out-of-School Suspensions

An analysis of the three schools with pilot inschool suspension programs shows that as the school used and accepted this program, fewer students were placed in out-of-school suspension situations (Table 6). The totals for the last three months of 1974 show that there were 41 inschool suspensions and 412 out-of-school suspensions, or approximately 1 inschool suspension for every 10 out-of-school suspensions. During the school year 1974-75 there were 973 inschool suspensions and 495 out-of-school suspensions, or approximately 2 inschool for each out-of-school suspension. This is a dramatic reduction in the use of out-of-school suspensions. This ratio improves even more in 1975-76 when there was a total of 1279 inschool suspensions and 388 out-of-school suspensions, showing that there were more than 3 inschool suspensions for each out-of-school suspension.

If purposes of the inschool suspension program are to keep the student in school, to keep the student working on school-related subjects, to differentiate between minor and serious offenses, and to have some supervision of the disciplinary routine, it would seem that the inschool suspension program works for the Hillsborough Schools. The numbers of suspensions in these three schools show an increase between 1974-75 and 1975-76 of approximately 200. This increase is noteworthy because there was generally a decrease (district-wide) in

Table 6

IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS IN THREE SCHOOLS

	1975-76												1974-75											
	GRECO			JEFFERSON			ROBINSON			TOTALS			GRECO			JEFFERSON			ROBINSON			TOTALS		
	IN	OUT	TOT	IN	OUT	TOT	IN	OUT	TOT	IN	OUT	TOT	IN	OUT	TOT	IN	OUT	TOT	IN	OUT	TOT	IN	OUT	TOT
August/September	20	6	26	95	2	97	19	20	39	134	28	162	0	9	9	0	63	63	0	22	22	0	94	94
October	52	10	62	131	13	144	32	33	65	215	56	271	47	13	60	0	27	27	25	20	45	72	60	132
November	37	14	51	92	9	101	28	12	40	157	35	192	53	14	67	25	35	60	18	19	37	96	68	164
December	35	8	43	94	6	100	27	9	36	156	23	179	38	7	45	56	7	63	9	11	20	103	25	128
January	38	23	61	16	15	31	21	6	27	75	44	119	45	19	64	39	11	50	17	13	30	101	43	144
February	36	8	44	78	15	93	32	10	42	146	33	179	70	24	94	90	22	112	31	26	57	191	72	263
March	50	9	59	96	26	122	41	25	66	187	60	247	51	10	61	90	8	98	17	17	34	158	35	193
April	44	25	69	30	4	34	26	27	53	100	56	156	52	23	75	45	4	49	26	10	36	123	37	160
May/June	37	38	75	49	4	53	23	11	34	109	53	162	42	35	77	53	3	56	34	23	57	129	61	190
TOTALS	349	141	490	681	94	775	249	153	402	1279	388	1667	398	154	552	398	180	578	177	161	338	973	495	1468

	1974 (partial)											
March	0	100	100	0	97	97	15	8	23	15	205	220
April	0	4	4	0	67	67	16	3	19	16	74	90
May/June	0	58	58	0	55	55	10	20	30	10	133	143
TOTALS	0	162	162	0	219	219	41	31	72	41	412	453

suspensions in junior and senior high schools between 1973-74 and 1975-76. On the other hand, when these data are cross-validated with perceptions of the principals, it is noted that principals in these schools used the inschool suspension somewhat more freely than the more serious out-of-school suspension.

Perceptions of Secondary Principals

While Hillsborough County keeps statistical reports to categorize suspensions by race and sex, these data are not always useful in explaining the suspension rate. If people perceive one thing--even though the data might show another--the people will rely upon their own perceptions. With this in mind, one aspect of the study was to obtain the perceptions of various people about the suspension situation. These were obtained through structured interviews with sample numbers of different school role groups: principals, teachers, students, and the community.

In each interview principals' perceptions were sought concerning (1) status of suspensions; (2) status of school discipline; (3) procedures for handling disciplinary cases; (4) offenses punishable by suspension; (5) the means by which pupils and parents are informed about school rules, with particular reference to suspension rules; and (6) the use of techniques of discipline other than suspension.

Status of Suspensions

It is the belief of the principals that the number of suspensions has decreased markedly since the high point reached shortly after the schools were desegregated. They agreed that there were fewer suspensions

In 1975-76 than in 1974-75, and that there were fewer in 1974-75 than in 1973-74. The composite estimate was that approximately 75% of suspended students experienced only one suspension, while the other 25% went through the process two or more times.

The consensus was that suspensions are differentiated by race and sex. Any one black male student was more likely to be suspended than was any one white male student, and any one black female student was more likely to be suspended than was any one white female student. The principals perceived that about three times as many males as females were suspended during 1975-76.

Status of School Discipline

None of the principals believed that discipline was lax or a problem in his school. Typical comments were: "I think we have good discipline--yes, with very few problems"; "We have real good discipline."; "I'm hard-nosed, and we have excellent discipline."; "Our discipline is generally good because we have good kids."

Factors -- real or imagined -- which lead to disciplinary action in the schools were perceived by a number of the principals as including:

1. Language used by student was sometimes abusive among both blacks and whites.
2. Numbers of pupils, often blacks, come from deprived neighborhoods. The schools do not reach these students, and therefore their abilities stay at a low level. Their frustrations lead to misbehavior.
3. Black students often resent authority, particularly white

authority, and rebel against it.

4. Black students misbehave more often because of problems outside of the school. Many do not have good home lives, and see violence both on the streets and at home.
5. Many black students believe that the principal will not deal with them fairly and therefore come to the principal antagonistically, or sometimes will not respond. White pupils might not tell the truth but will communicate.
6. Behavior of black students is different than that of white students; many wear caps and flashy clothes in school, talk loudly, and run in groups.
7. Teachers are afraid of black students.
8. Black students fight more than white students, and sometimes fight in school over things that happened outside of school.
9. A lack of firm policies, both on the county and on individual school levels, causes many disciplinary problems.
10. Prior to desegregation, black schools were like a circus. There was no concern about tardiness or absence, and so many outsiders wandered around in them that teachers had to lock their doors. It has taken some time to change these attitudes.
11. When desegregation was implemented, blacks felt they were losing their schools and their status, and they resented it.
12. Prior to desegregation, there were two standards of behavior--one for blacks and one for whites. With desegregation, black students were required to adapt to the white students' patterns of behavior.

13. "Kids are kids," and will get into trouble whether they're black or white.

Procedures for Handling Disciplinary Cases

While procedures vary in detail from one school to another, there are many areas of commonality. If a student misbehaves but is controllable, the teacher generally sends a referral to the dean, who later contacts the student for a disciplinary conference. If the student is not under control, the teacher will call for assistance and the dean (with assistance, if necessary) will come to get the student.

The principals reported that the dean gets a statement of misbehavior from the teacher, reads it to the student, and asks the student for his or her side of the story. In most schools, if necessary, the dean will also confer with other school professional personnel. All principals reported that, if the dean finds that the student committed an offense which could lead to suspension, the dean either telephones or schedules a conference with the parent.

In approximately half the schools, the dean actually suspends the student when it is considered necessary, under authority delegated by the principal. In the other schools, the dean recommends suspension, and the principal either suspends or authorizes the dean to do it. In all cases, the suspension letter is signed by the principal. Most suspensions are for 3 days, but some schools suspend a student for 5 to 10 days and then reduce the suspension following a successful parent conference.

One of the schools followed the policy that teachers have the

first conference with parents when a student misbehaves. If this is not successful, the teacher refers the student to the dean. Once a week, the principal, deans, counselors, and human relations specialist meet to discuss all referrals. Following that conference, the dean takes action. Some schools required teachers to confer with parents prior to referring a student to the dean, except in emergency situations.

Offenses Punishable by Suspension

Principals said that offenses which most often lead to suspension were physical in nature. Almost all principals gave "fighting" as a reason, and almost also included "physical attack" or "assault." The next group of offenses most often mentioned were "defiance of the teacher," "disrespect," and "disruptive behavior." Other suspendable offenses mentioned by principals in free conversation were (in rank order).

Smoking	Drugs
Truancy	Extortion
Alcohol	Vandalism
Stealing or theft	Endangering self or others
Excessive tardiness	Gross misbehavior
Having a weapon	

Means by Which Students and Parents are Informed of Rules

In the senior high schools, the school and county handbook is distributed in homerooms, and the homeroom teacher discusses it with the students. In one high school, the school rules are also explained to students via closed circuit television.

The pattern of informing junior high students of the rules varies from school to school, except that all schools use the handbook and all schools do explain and discuss their rules with the students. Some schools use physical education classes; others use an assembly, homerooms, and English classes. Several schools use more than one method.

All schools require pupils to take the handbook home, show it to their parents or guardians, and return a signed card to the school. All principals agreed that there was no reason why students and parents should not be completely familiar with individual school and county rules and policies.

Disciplinary Techniques Other Than Suspension

The principals were asked what types of punishment other than suspension were used. Approximately 75% reported using work details. However, some principals expressed concern about work details, particularly with reference to adequate supervision to reduce the possibility of tort liability should the student be injured or cause injury to another. Most work details involved cleaning lunch rooms, shops, and so forth, but this must be done outside of class time, lest it become a reward rather than a punishment. One principal who assigns work details in the student's home, in consultation with the parent, reported that the parents heartily approved of that form of discipline.

Some principals (75%) also reported the use of corporal punishment, most often in the form of giving a choice between "three licks or three days." Younger students usually select the "licks," while high

school seniors opt for the "days." About half of the principals using corporal punishment said that it is used on boys only -- the other half used the paddle regardless of the sex of the students.

While not all principals stated specifically that they used parent conferences and reprimands as a form of discipline, these two disciplinary measures obviously are used in all schools. Approximately half of the schools use reprimand and parent conferences as part of the suspension process, while the other half sometimes use them instead of suspension.

Five principals stated that they used some form of inschool suspension, generally through informal arrangements with a dean and using the clinic as a facility. The other principals were fairly unanimous in saying that they would like to use inschool suspension, but lacked both personnel and facilities. They believed that an inschool suspension room, staffed by a strict disciplinarian who would require the students to do school work, would be an effective way to decrease the number of regular suspensions. They believed that the county school system should make resources available for this purpose.

Four principals used detention after school as a form of punishment. Others stated that they did not use detention because of a lack of personnel to stay late and because of transportation difficulties.

One principal mentioned a unique form of punishment. In the presence of the principal, the student was required to telephone home and relate where he was and why he was there. After the student had told the parent these things, the principal would talk to the parent and the two of them would decide upon a course of action. The princi-

pal stated that the students considered this to be a drastic form of punishment.

Summary

While the principals believed that the suspension rate has gone down, they still thought that approximately 15% of county secondary school students are suspended each year. They believed that the likelihood of suspension falls in order on black males, black females, white females, white males and white females. The most frequently cited reasons for suspensions were fighting or other forms of violence.

From the interviews, it became obvious that many, but not all, of the principals held stereotyped views of black students, their home conditions, and their behaviors. One possible conclusion is that principals, and their staffs through their leadership, expect that black students will behave in certain unacceptable ways, and that these expectations may indeed lead to fulfillment. In other words, the self-fulfilling prophecy syndrome may be playing an important role in discipline in the secondary schools in Hillsborough County.

A self-fulfilling prophecy is one that fulfills itself as a result of the behaviors of the person who makes the prophecy, believes it, and acts as though the prophecy is true. Your beliefs about the outcome of a social situation of which you are a part are a factor in the outcome of that situation. Your expectations of a particular outcome strongly influence the obtaining of the outcome.

Perceptions of Secondary Students and Faculty

Procedures

The questions which guided interviews with students and faculty

in six selected schools are listed in Figure I, and details of the distribution of respondents for the series of interviews relating to discipline and suspension from Hillsborough County High Schools are shown in Table 7. There was an approximate balance between student and faculty responses, and the distribution of responses (male and female-black and white) closely approximates the distribution of these groups in the school system. A compilation of the distribution of responses by students and faculty in the three junior and three senior high schools and a compilation (number and percentage) of all students and all faculty are presented in Table 8. During the interview respondents were asked to expand upon their replies.

In some cases, respondents marked more than one response or marked a general answer which could best be described as one or the other of two responses. In those cases, responses are shown on Table 8 as a combination of two response categories. Occasionally, a multiple response to an item has caused a slight fluctuation in the total of responses. Percentages in Table 8 have been computed only on the columns headed as "all students" and "all faculty."

Summary of Responses

The written responses to the questions were generally predictable. Students and faculty seemed to agree in general and provided similar responses to the items. A general summary to each question given in Figure I and to each item given in Figure I along with the data on items in Table 8 follows:

Question 1. What upsets you? Rudeness, disrespect, defiance, disobedience, fighting, profanity, talking too much in class, pushing,

Figure I
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL INTERVIEWS
OF FACULTY AND STUDENTS IN 6 SCHOOLS

1. What type of student behavior upsets you the most? _____

   Why? _____

(Item 1, Table 8) Which ethnic group normally exhibits that kind of behavior? Black? White? Spanish? All?

2. What type of student behavior pleases you the most? _____

   Why? _____

(Item 2, Table 8) Which ethnic group normally exhibits that kind of behavior? Black? White? Spanish? All?

3. (Item 3, Table 8) Do you feel that the school system in Hillsborough County is suspending too few or too many students? Too Few? _____ Too Many? _____

4. (Item 4, Table 8) Do you feel that your school is suspending too few or too many students? Too Few? _____ Too Many? _____

   Why? _____

5. (Item 5, Table 8) Do you feel that schools are giving students due process before suspensions? Yes _____ No _____ Why? _____

6. (Item 6, Table 8) Do you think there is bias involved in the suspensions of students? Yes _____ No _____

6a. (Item 6a, Table 8) If so, toward which group? White? Black? Spanish?

7. (Item 7, Table 8) Are you familiar with any successful programs that deal with suspensions? Yes _____ No_____ If yes, Name some

   _____

8. If you assume that some form of punishment should be administered to students for deviant behavior, what creative action would you propose? _____

9. If you were in charge of the school system and had the power to deal with suspensions, what would you do to overcome the problem?

   _____

TABLE 7

SAMPLE OF FACULTY AND STUDENT RESPONDENTS BY RACE AND SEX TO INTERVIEWS ABOUT DISCIPLINE POLICY

	Students	Faculty	Total	% of Total
Black	16	5	21	17
Whites	40	53	93	77
Latins	5	2	7	6
TOTALS	61	60	121	100

	Students	Faculty	Total	% of Total
Male	31	26	57	47
Female	30	34	64	53
TOTALS	61	60	121	100

shoving, distractions, negative attitudes, bragging and acting big, destruction of property.

Why? Someone could get hurt, shows immaturity, shows disrespect, distracts other from learning, upsets other students.

Item 1. Who? Over half of the student respondents perceived blacks as exhibiting the kind of behavior that upset them the most. This is not surprising since 66% of the student respondents were white. Only a third (37%) of the faculty respondents, however, perceived black pupils in this behavioral role; about one-half (46%) of the faculty respondents thought upsetting behavior was exhibited by all ethnic groups. Perceptions varied from school-to-school as might be anticipated: in School C, example, 7 out of 10 student respondents thought black pupils were upsetting and all 5 faculty members at that school agreed. Responses from the other 5 schools showed a fairly normal distribution by ethnic group. Since faculty respondents were 88% white, it is obvious that they illustrated much more tolerance as a group towards behavior patterns of the opposite race than did students.

Question 2. What student behavior pleases you? Getting along, school spirit, helping others, interest in school, cooperation, involvement in activities, exerting effort, cooperation, promptness.

Why? Shows interest, promotes good learning, helps students in later life, maintains standards and quality, shows maturity, facilitates learning.

Item 2. Who? Nearly half (48%) of the student respondents perceived whites as exhibiting pleasing behavior but only 4 students

out of 60 perceived black pupils in this role. Since 16 of the 61 student respondents were black it is interesting to note that only 25% of the black group saw blacks with student behavior that pleased them. Only 3 out of 59 faculty responding to this item perceived black students as exhibiting behavior pleasing to them; however, 59% of the faculty respondents thought pleasing behavior was exhibited by all ethnic groups.

Question 3. Is the system suspending too few or too many students? Why? Item 3. Respondents didn't appear to have any strong opinions one way or another as to the rate of suspensions in the Hillsborough Schools. About one-third (29%) of the student respondents thought there were too few suspensions in the school system, one-third (37%) thought there were too many, and one-third (34%) thought the rate was about right or had no opinion. Faculty responses were very similar to those of students: about one-third (30%) thought too few, one-third (28%) thought too many, and one-third (42%) thought the rate was about right or had no opinion.

Assuming the sampling of respondents reflects generally the total population it is indicated that students and faculties in the Hillsborough secondary schools are not particularly agitated about discipline through the use of suspensions being too excessive or too lax.

Concerns that the system is suspending too few students were related to legal complications; too many discipline problems get by and allow distractions; there are no alternatives to suspension.

Question 4. Are there too few or too many suspensions in your school?

Why? Item 4. When asked perceptions about the rate of suspensions in their own schools, respondents showed a slight inclination to see the need for stronger disciplinary action with more suspensions, but about half of them either thought the suspension rate about right or had no opinion. Of the student respondents 29% perceived too few suspensions in their own schools and 25% too many; of the faculty respondents 30% thought too few suspensions and 22% thought too many.

Persons who indicated that there were too few suggested that without more suspensions others were being deprived of the opportunity to learn, administrators were not strict enough, there is a need to crack down on students, teachers and administrators are afraid of certain students.

Question 5. Do schools give students due process? Why? Item 5. Only 4 student respondents (7%) and no faculty respondents perceived that students were not being given due process before suspension. Ninety per cent of the student respondents and 95% of faculty respondents believed that adequate due process was given prior to suspension.

Quite often there were positive statements such as: police have explained the process, warnings are given, there is too much due process, procedures are explained in the handbook, warnings are used.

Question 6. Is bias shown in suspensions? Item 6. Student and faculty respondents both perceived no bias involved in the suspensions of students. Fifty-two out of 61 students (85%) and 50 out of 60 faculty members (84%) were of this opinion.

Question 6a. If there is bias, towards which group? Item 6a.

Of the 14 respondents who perceived bias involved in suspensions, all but 2 thought it was toward black students.

Question 7. Are you familiar with any successful programs that deal with suspensions? Item 7. Forty-seven percent of the student respondents and 70% of the faculty respondents stated they were familiar with successful programs dealing with suspensions. The most general response was the "inschool suspension program," although there were some comments about work detail and alternate schools.

Question 8. If you assume that some form of punishment should be administered to students for deviant behavior, what creative action would you propose?

Question 9. If you were in charge of the school system and had the power to deal with suspensions, what would you do to overcome the problem?

In both questions, much concern was expressed for more involvement of parents, the need for some legal action against parents if youngsters continued to act out, the wish that there could be multicultural workshops for students and teachers, the use of some elective system to allow youngsters to choose courses more closely related to areas of interest, the use of alternative schools, involvement of the business community, more social activity, more comprehensive intramural programs, additional counselors, use of student and faculty advisory committees, and judicious use of special programming.

Perceptions of the Community About Discipline

A small number of citizens in various sections of Hillsborough County were interviewed for their reaction to discipline in the schools (N=30; black n=12; white n=18). The group interviewed was 40% black and 60% white or Spanish surnamed and included representatives of three major community organizations which are active in the interests of schools: the PTA, the League of Women Voters, and the NAACP. While the interviewees were basically representative of the community at large the sample number interviewed was too small to make any generalizations about their perceptions. The data reported in this component are therefore viewed as only suggestive and certainly not conclusive in any scientific sense.

1. Community respondents indicated general familiarity with the student handbooks issued to all secondary students: 53% of respondents said they were "very familiar" with this material; 23% claimed "moderate" familiarity; and only 24% indicated they were "not at all" familiar with the handbooks.

2. When asked "Do you think secondary principals are, in fact, enforcing these policies and regulations to the best of their ability?" 60% of the community respondents answered "somewhat," 34% thought "a little" and 6% "not at all." No respondents perceived principals as enforcing the regulations "all the way."

3. Twenty-three percent of the community respondents believed that extracurricular activities had been curtailed "all the way" because of desegregation, another 47% perceived them as "somewhat" curtailed, 17% as "a little" curtailed, and 13% as "not at all." At the

same time, 60% believed it was "significantly" more difficult for blacks to participate in extracurricular activities. All black respondents perceived a serious curtailment of extracurricular activities with desegregation and a greater difficulty for blacks than whites to participate.

Lack of transportation to home and money were the problem areas mentioned repeatedly. With the exception of so-called "jock buses," the system does not provide transportation for black students. Primarily they are the students being bused out of their communities. Examples of economic factors were high fees and cost of uniforms (e.g., six cheerleader outfits). Individual comments were, "Activities should be included in the regular school day," "Generally blacks are poorer and cannot afford private cars," "Club membership is always by vote of present membership," "Access of activities to all youth through extended school day," "Blacks obviously excluded from student government," "Service clubs have limited membership based on friendships," "Blacks are minority, but rules are set up by the majority," and "Blacks are always the minority."

4. Very few community respondents perceive due process before suspension as really working; 87% voiced the opinion that schools are not giving students adequate due process prior to suspension. Several interesting individual comments were made such as "moving toward due process," "Attempt being made to comply," "Better but not enough," "Token only," "School handles parent through 'form letter' approach," "Administration is judge and jury," "Grievance procedure needs changing," "No system-wide uniformity in process due to different inter-

pretations of rules," and "In legal sense due process is given but rules are wrong in first place."

The general tenor received about the due process question is summarized in the statement, "The letter of the law is followed but not the spirit of due process." Several persons gave this example as illustrative: a student cannot be suspended for being tardy, but a student who is tardy two or three times will to told not to be tardy again. A suspension occurs for willful disobedience of authority the next time the student is tardy.

5. Three-fourths of the respondents perceived a sort of bias in the suspension process, and 80% of these thought the bias was against black students. Respondents, however, generally answered to this issue in relation to disproportionate numbers by race, rather than to the feeling of discrimination by intent.

6. A need for school personnel having training to deal with students of the opposite culture was indicated by 80% of the respondents. "Past human relations training was permissive so the wrong people attended---should be mandatory." Respondents also stated emphasis is on control rather than understanding or commitment. "Some understandings are developing by 'pure osmosis'." Other comments were "Lot of it is due to stereotyping," "Can't just take a course," "Teachers use to care for kids and would take action when a student started straying," "Need for anthropological, psychological, and socio-economic explorations by all teachers to understand the cultural and social differences of other teachers and students." The general tenor discovered in this question was the feeling "There is

no real commitment 'at the top' beyond compliance."

7. Slightly contrary to the community perception (75%) that there was a sort of bias in suspension procedures was the response (80%) that the disproportionate number of minority students suspended is more because of differences in socio-economic backgrounds than because of racial or ethnic differences. It is frequently alleged, of course, that middle class or aspiring middle class school personnel exercise considerable bias against lower class pupils. If bias does exist in suspensions it may indeed be more of a class phenomenon than an ethnic problem.

Individual comments were " _____ Junior High is a good example---has some really tough white girls," "Bad enough to be poor and white but worse to be poor and black," "Different values taught in homes," "I also feel there is a degree of racism present," "School attendance zones are gerrymanded according to socio-economic status."

The Human Relations Program

The Hillsborough County School system was one of the first large metropolitan districts to implement a total desegregation plan. The school system's success in the implementation of this plan has been due in some measure to the special programs and services provided for by federal Emergency School Aid Act funds. Major emphasis has been placed on the implementation of a comprehensive Human Relations Program designed to reduce racial tensions and conflicts, while establishing and maintaining an understanding of and appreciation for

people of different cultures and backgrounds. The Human Relations Program has been given the responsibility for the prevention of and the intervention in disruptive racial incidents occurring in schools and on school buses; meeting requests for intensive programs designed to provide students, parents, and school personnel meaningful opportunities to develop a better appreciation for and understanding of people from different cultures and backgrounds; reversing a decline in the participation in student activities by minority group students; and overcoming a lack of school involvement on the part of parents and minority group students.

Staffing

The Human Relations Program staff consists of one supervisor and six human relations specialists housed in the central office. The school-based staff consists of thirty-seven school-community specialists located at senior high schools and eighth and ninth grade centers.

The professional staff was selected on the basis of the following minimum qualifications: (1) state and local certification requirements for teachers (Rank III, Bachelors Degree); (2) successful teaching experiences in a multicultural setting; (3) evidence of an understanding of and sensitivity toward children and adults; (4) the willingness and expertise to work as a member of a biracial team in carrying out the duties and responsibilities necessary for the successful operation of the program.

Services Rendered

1. The human relations staff works with the deans in handling student disciplinary referrals.

a. Confer individually with referred students on possible causes and solutions to the disciplinary problem.

b. Consult with teachers and other school personnel directly involved with the student to determine conditions that may be affecting the student's behavior.

c. Assess all information received regarding the student, and identify alternative actions that can be taken by the student and others to help improve the disciplinary problem.

d. Confer with parents of the referred student.

e. Collaborate with the deans on additional interventions that could be used to help student.

f. Weekly or monthly meetings are held with deans and other school supportive personnel to discuss student disciplinary problems and solution.

g. Human relations personnel work with the deans and other administrative personnel in analyzing disciplinary actions taken with students to insure that due process is followed.

2. The human relations staff consults with students before and after suspension.

a. Human relations personnel frequently confer with students before they leave for an out-of-school suspension. In cases where transportation is unavailable to the students, human relations personnel can take them home.

b. When the students return to school and their behavior difficulties necessitate further help, human relations personnel will conduct in-depth consultations with the students and the necessary school personnel.

c. In secondary schools where inschool suspension programs are available, human relations staff members who supervise inschool suspension areas counsel students and talk with parents of the students involved in the program.

3. The human relations staff conducts sequential intervention strategies for target students.

a. Human relations personnel provide referral forms and conferences for principals, deans, and teachers designed to identify target students (i.e., pupils who are leaning toward possible suspension or who have already been suspended.)

b. More specifically, target students' behaviors are evidenced by (1) excessive tardiness and absenteeism, (2) expressed difficulties in communicating and relating to individuals of different racial or cultural groups, (3) low academic achievement, (4) repeated disciplinary referrals to administrators and (5) continuous low participation in school activities.

c. After target students are identified, conditions in the school or home that may be adversely affecting the stu-

dents' behavior are determined and analyzed. Based on this analysis intensive programs and support materials are designed to meet the needs of the student.

d. These programs involve students in planned activities on an individual basis and in small groups. The programs can include such things as student contracts for self-improvement, skill-building mini-sessions, and student-teacher-parent conferences.

4. The human relations staff conducts a continuous analysis of the discipline program.

a. Human relations personnel seek feedback from teachers on target students' behavior and on teaching strategies that are useful with the students.

b. They work closely with the administrators in monitoring suspension records and disciplinary referrals. This process helps to determine if any of the targeted students have been suspended or resuspended.

c. Conferences between parent-teacher, parent-student, or parent-teacher-student are held.

d. Records are maintained to outline positive changes in the target students' behavior, and to provide feedback that can be used for program modification.

5. The human relations staff assists parents of suspended or target students.

a. Staff makes direct contacts with parents as much as possible to explain the nature of student offenses committed,

duration of suspension, and parental actions that can be taken to help improve the disciplinary problem.

b. Makes home visits to acquire vital information regarding the background and life styles of target students and to explain school programs and policies.

c. Involves parents in parent education programs and problem-solving group discussions.

d. Seeks parental participation in PTA and PAC-sponsored activities.

Areas of Concern

For the Human Relations Program to function more adequately certain problem areas may need to be addressed:

1. The human relations specialists need to establish more credibility within their assigned schools. They are currently serving in a "no man's land" by not being administrators or classroom teachers. Principals could facilitate their acceptance in much the same way that they treat all special educational personnel (e.g., reading specialists).

2. The need for continuous training of the Human Relations Program staff is also a factor in establishing and maintaining their individual and collective credibility. An array of special skills is needed to assure top performance.

3. Secondary schools that are having the highest number of student suspensions need to be identified, and a greater concentration of human relations inservice training activities instituted.

4. Some feeling exists in all role groups that the School Board and central administration may not be supportive enough of the need

for a strong human relations effort in the schools; the record to date would indicate otherwise.

5. A concern exists for the Human Relations Program to be oriented more towards the preventive aspects of discipline including early activities in the elementary schools. That is, the perception prevails in some quarters that the Program should not be concentrated on handling disruptive students and school situations after the fact but on preventing disruption.

Student Handbooks

The junior and senior high schools in Hillsborough County distribute a student handbook to each student at the beginning of the year. This handbook typically consists of two parts: the county's general policies and individual school policies. Schools require pupils to take the handbook home, show it to parents or guardians, then to return a card signed by the parent indicating this has been done. This is one approach to assure that students and parents know about both the county and the individual school policies and regulations. The handbooks must be precise enough to cover the legal aspects of student discipline, yet attention must be paid to the reading level so that students and adults can understand the material.

A review of several student handbooks suggests that the complication and reading levels may be sufficiently high to hinder the understanding or interpretation of school rules by many parents and children. The inclusion of a condensed, simplified version along with the basic handbook is certainly appropriate.

The students handbooks are of good quality and seem to specify

the rules and regulations quite thoroughly. Some periodic follow-up may be valuable to determine if students and parents can, indeed, understand the material, and to see if students and parents are actually reading the books. It could be that the handbooks are another example of a situation where those who need them least are probably the ones who read and understand them the best.

Since a separate effort is currently being made by the Hillsborough Schools and cooperating citizens groups to develop, adopt, and implement a revised uniform student conduct code, that component of the discipline process was not included in this study.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Objectives of School Discipline

The primary purpose of all disciplinary action is, by definition, behavior modification. The relative effectiveness of any punishment or more positive disciplinary action must be measured by the degree to which it eliminates undesirable or unacceptable behavior. Many hours could be spent arguing about the relative effectiveness of a variety of methods used to deal with behavioral problems. They might include such measures as corporal punishment, suspension, expulsion, detention, principal-pupil conferences, teacher-pupil conferences, teacher-parent conferences, or other modifications and combinations of the above.

However, there is probably little disagreement regarding ultimate purposes of minimal behavioral standards and the insistence that they be met by all students. Primary among these objectives are:

A. A positve learning atmosphere in each classroom and teaching-learning relationship. Basic to this atmosphere are a respect for the teacher and a respect for the right of other stu-

dents to learn. Whenever a teacher's status is jeopardized or the rights of other students are violated, learning cannot be maximized.

B. Individual freedom and security for each student outside the classroom to move about the school premises without fear of intimidation by other students. Each time students are threatened, assaulted, or deprived of their money or possessions, these individual rights are violated.

C. System-wide standards which afford sufficient flexibility for each unique teaching-learning situation. Differences in teaching styles, variations in course offerings, or changes in classroom activities require that each teacher has the right and the responsibility to set and vary, within reasonable limits, rules of conduct. It would be unfair and unwise, in most instances, to impose highly specific rules upon all classes.

E. Security of the school's property and the possessions of all individuals who make up the total school population.

F. A reasonable uniformity providing equitable treatment in all disciplinary processes.

Conclusions

The following conclusions or generalizations are suggested by the findings of the study:

1. A significant number of suspensions have resulted from minor offenses most of which are nondisruptive: tardiness, absence, smoking, cutting classes, negative reaction to authority, and the like. In 1975-76, for example, 9% of secondary suspensions were for tardiness, 15% for truancy, 5% for smoking, and 6% for obscenity and profanity -- a total of 35%.

2. The suspension rate for black students is clearly disproportionate to their numbers in the school system; in 1975-76, 44% of secondary suspensions were blacks (30% males and 14% females) compared to 19% black students in the system, (approximately two and one-half times).

3. There are certain probable contributing factors to the disproportionate rate of black suspensions in Hillsborough County; some of these can reasonably be addressed by the school system, others are more difficult.

   a. Staff perceives that black students resent authority and especially white authority figures.

   b. Students from economically deprived home and community situations have special frustrations educationally and socially.

   c. Generally, white middle-class communication patterns and standards exist in the schools and these are per-

ceived as superior by staff and much of the community.

d. In the implementation of desegregation plans there was some disparity between the way formerly black secondary schools and formerly white secondary schools were treated.

e. A student behind academically is more often frustrated, has a lower self-concept, and tends to be a chronic discipline problem.

4. Neither the general suspension rate nor the fact that blacks are suspended at a rate disproportionate to their number in the student body are factors peculiar to Hillsborough County. Both situations exist in most Florida school districts and desegregated districts everywhere to a greater or lesser degree. This, of course, does not diminish the seriousness of these factors in the Hillsborough Schools.

5. High suspension numbers and the disproportionate black rate result in part from a core of chronic, discipline-prone cases.

6. An inhouse suspension program is perceived as the clearest and quickest way to decrease discipline problems in the Hillsborough Schools.

7. Many teachers and administrators in the Tampa Schools still hold stereotyped perceptions of minority behavior as marginal and frequently disruptive. The fact that similar perceptions are held for all pupils from lower socio-economic areas does not lessen the seriousness of the stereotype.

8. School staff, students, and community in Tampa perceive that differences in culture do exist between and among the majority

populations and various minority groups. They also perceive that some persons in authority occasionally misunderstand the minority life style and tend to react negatively to it.

9. Guidance counselors play a strategic role in successfully integrated education. Blacks are under-represented in guidance positions in the Hillsborough Schools -- current numbers are 12% at the senior high school level and 6% at the junior high school level.

10. Secondary building principals, assistant principals, and deans can exercise a dramatic leadership role in successfully integrated education. Blacks in Tampa secondary school administration are slightly under-represented -- 25 out of 92 (27%) junior and senior high school deans are black; 2 out of 24 assistant high school principals (8%) are black; 5 out of 38 principals (13%) are black.

11. The Hillsborough County Human Relations Program has played an important role in the successful desegregation of the schools. As the County moves gradually toward a greater level of integration, the Program's direction needs to be re-evaluated, as well as its methods of operation. The Program is probably spread too thinly across the system; it suffers from a confusion of roles and role expectations (i.e, there is some feeling it should be a line program and its staff part of the administrative team; it is more generally a staff program which provides specialized expertise and services to the administrative team but has no administrative authority); and there appears to be some lack of general community and administrative support for the idea that a human relations program is needed except in emergency situations.

12. As presently organized, the burden of disciplinary action falls primarily on school deans.

13. There continues to be a vital need for communication channels to exist between the schools, and particularly the central administration, and the minority community.

14. The availability and flexibility of curriculum offerings and patterns are directly related to discipline problems at the secondary level, particularly in a desegregated situation. Students and their parents need to have some options they can exercise in terms of special schools, special studies, instructional styles, and the like.

15. The Hillsborough School system continues to be perceived as one of the most successfully desegregated school systems in the country, one in which the community and state can take considerable pride. The schools, generally, are healthy places for children to be and the school atmosphere is perceived as unusually warm and friendly with a low level of hostility.

Recommendations

The following recommendations, some of which are already being implemented in whole or part, are suggested as a result of the findings and conclusions made in the study:

1. Suspensions are seriously disruptive to the educational progress of individual students; consequently, they should be administered sparingly and only for substantial injury to person or property or substantial disruption to the school program. In order to do

this, consensus should be reached uniformly as to which student infractions are major ones and only those should merit suspension.

2. Teachers and administrators who are responsible for an exceptionally large number of referrals leading to suspensions or for the actual suspensions should be required to account for these disproportionate numbers. An analysis may indicate the differences to be entirely justifiable, but the concept of accountability is important.

3. The reading skills are directly related to discipline and suspension problems. The reading program for Hillsborough secondary schools should be thoroughly evaluated by an outside agency, and a needs assessment in reading made. Some priority of staff and resources should be allocated to the secondary reading program for improvement in remedial reading, reading in the content area, developmental reading, special reading classes, and the like.

4. The employment and assignment of black guidance counselors, particularly at the junior high school level, should be roughly doubled as soon as feasible (currently 9 out of 102 are black).

5. The employment and assignment of black high school assistant principals should be increased as soon as possible (currently 2 out of 24 are black).

6. Since teachers and administrators as a reciprocal to students are responsible for instigating processes that result in suspensions, a compulsory inservice training program should be developed for all secondary principals in the system and for teachers in target schools (those with an unusually high suspension rate). The inservice program should be task-oriented and directed to skill-building

for solutions to specific school programs related to the discipline process. Some sessions should involve all role groups in the educational program so that concerns about discipline are not addressed in isolation (i.e, principals talking only with each other). Administrators' training should not be under the direction of the Human Relations Program but should receive primary direction and full support from the Central Administrative offices with the Human Relations staff serving in an advisory capacity.

7. The Human Relations Program should be reorganized to concentrate on specific problems in selected target schools with some continued mobility coming from a small, centrally-located staff. It should not be responsible for inservice programs with administrators. Its function should be clearly seen as one of supportive services to administrative staff in a specialized area. Provision should be made for the continuous training and upgrading of the Program staff so as to maintain a position of expertise. The role of Program staff assigned to individual schools should go beyond a student counseling function.

8. The school system should establish an inhouse suspension program in 5 or 6 secondary schools in 1977-78. These should be in schools with the greatest incidence of out-of-school suspensions. Financial priorities would have to be given to this program.

9. Financial support should be allocated to the establishment of a city-wide alternative school for students unable to cope with the normal secondary school environment. Assignment could be both voluntary and referred and reasonably flexible in terms of receiving and returning pupils to regular schools. The educational program

would be an open one with individualization, special guidance and counseling, out-of-school study and work assignments, vocational programs, remedial programs, and the like. Such a program should be co-sponsored and have close ties to the local business community, institutions of higher education, and various nonprofit community organizations. The Parkway Project in Philadelphia and the MacArthur School in Miami have programs which could be replicated in part for such a facility. Additional monies from the Congress under the ESAA program may be available.

10. Inservice programs for teachers and staff in target schools should not only be compulsory but should include student and parent role groups so that opportunity for interaction between staff and school clients can be enhanced.

11. A planned relationship needs to be developed between counseling services and the secondary school dean's office in order to increase the support for students and reduce somewhat the punitive role of the dean's office.

12. The number of years a school dean my serve without a varied experience should be limited.

13. Regularly scheduled and planned communication sessions should be maintained and continued between minority group representatives and various levels of the school administration, including the superintendent's office.

14. A counseling and training program for economically poor parents should be developed to open communication with them and to

assist them to understand and utilize the school system to best advantage. Perhaps this could be a function of the Human Relations Program, as well as of the Title I, ESEA Program which is now working in this area.

15. Central office administrative personnel should organize a plan to spend some time in individual schools modeling the best of administrative functions for the building administrators.

16. The Hillsborough County secondary staff should deliberately explore the possibilities which might be available to open up the curriculum and make it much more flexible; to involving community agencies, businesses, and local postsecondary institutions; to establishing magnet programs; and generally to be able to offer students a wide variety of educational alternatives.

17. The Hillsborough School system should continue to utilize to its greatest advantage available federal funds which can be related to improving the discipline program particularly as it involves problems incident to the desegregation process. Expanded use of the resources and facilities of the Florida School Desegregation Consulting Center is also recommended, particularly in the implementation of some of the study suggestions. With its growing national reputation for successful practice in a difficult endeavor -- the positive implementation of a court-ordered desegregation plan leading to improved quality of education for all children -- the system should be in a strong position also to obtain foundation and other funding for special exploratory programs which would otherwise be unavailable.

Summary

In summary, the Hillsborough County Schools are slowly but resolutely moving toward a quality educational program in a desegregated setting which should be the ultimate goal of public schools in a democratic society. The School Board and the citizens who give it their support are to be commended for their past performance and are urged to continue their dedicated quest for integrated quality education for all the children of Hillsborough County who attend the public schools.

APPENDIX A

Citizen Advisory Committee

to the

School Board of Hillsborough County, Florida

Report On Disruptive Pupils

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE SCHOOL BOARD OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

Report on Disruptive Pupils

The issue of disruptive pupils has become a serious problem in school systems throughout the United States. It has affected every school system in the State of Florida to some degree. The larger urban systems have had more difficulty than the smaller rural systems, but losses of future manpower to society and fiscal resources in terms of special programs, repairs, and security have been high. A Hillsborough County report prepared by Mrs. Ann Hyatt in 1971 addressed the question of student suspensions and determined that suspensions were effective in dealing with 78% of the youngsters since 78% were non-repeaters. The majority of children who were suspended had a profile of failure to learn and master basic skills in reading and simple arithmetic.

The problem became so serious in Florida that in June of 1973 the Governor commissioned a task force on disruptive youth to conduct a survey on selected counties throughout the State. Hillsborough County was one of the counties surveyed. Study findings indicated six variables as being the best predictors of disruptive youth. Those six were sex, race, sixth grade test score, most recent grade point average, verbal aptitude, and psychological referral. Quoting directly from the study: "If the pupil was male, black, had a low sixth grade test score; a low grade point average; a low verbal aptitude score; and had not been referred to psychological services, he was more likely to become a disruptive student and be either expelled or suspended from school."

According to Kern in an article in the May 1975 Education Digest, many of the youngsters who are disruptive come from the lower socio-economic levels where order, books, education, and personal goals and values are not emphasized. He distrusts adults in general and particularly those in positions of authority. He is sensitive to criticism and has an overwhelming need for self gratification with little concern for long-term goals. He does not want his attitudes or skills changed for he expects failure and is gratified when his negative expectations are realized.

The Hillsborough County School Board has attempted to reduce the impact of disruptive youth and turn youthful energies into more constructive paths. In the fall of 1971, after desegregation, the Hillsborough County School Board received an Emergency School Assistance Program Grant of 2-1/4 million dollars. That was the largest ESAP grant given by the Federal Government and it was used to upgrade human relations skills for both teachers and students. Human relations specialists were employed at both junior and senior high school levels to reduce the frequency of disruptions and increase tolerance levels among students.

The Board also agreed to an in-school suspension program at Robinson High School to reduce out-of-school suspensions. The thought was that some youngsters disrupted programs in order to be suspended so they could be away from the school. Much learning time was lost in the process and students who wished to be free of school gained that freedom through class disruptions. The in-school suspension program was designed to keep disruptive youngsters in school and learning skills during the suspension period.

More recently the Board approved an academic summer program to insure that students gained basic skills before being advanced from one grade to another at the elementary level. That program is designed to serve about 15,000 elementary students who lack basic skills primarily in reading and mathematics.

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Citizen Advisory Committee subcommittee on student disruptions recommends:

1. An expanded reading program for children with low reading skills.

There is a need at the elementary level to identify children with presistent reading problems and provide those children with remedial reading assistance. The committee emphasize the need for specially trained reading personnel to identify children with reading problems and, more specifically, remedial action for those problems. Those children should be removed from the regular class during portions of the day and taught the reading skills necessary for success in today's world.

2. An expanded and improved human relations program.

The human relations program began in Hillsborough County in 1971 and provided significant assistance during the desegregation transition. The program needs to be upgraded. Instead of reducing tensions in the schools, as it was designed, some human relations specialists appear to over-emphasize relatively minor incidents.

If some of these specialists either do not have the skill or the inclination to work at improving human relations, they should be replaced.

3. Compulsory inservice for teachers and administrators.

One of the primary problems of bettering relations between educators and disruptive students is one of interpersonal relations. By better understanding the feelings and attitudes of students, teachers and administrators can learn to work more effectively with them. When we explore the feelings and attitudes of students, we are examining their self-concepts.

The problems are expanded when students evaluate their situation and attempt to make changes through tactics which are unsuccessful and disruptive. Since success does not come quickly, they develop a deep sense of futility which increases the problem and alienates students. These students suffer intellectual listlessness and do not achieve because they have not been taught to value learning and do not know how to study.

If teachers and administrators are to become more effective in working with disruptive youth, they must become more knowledgeable of cultural differences and more skillful in building self-concepts. Behavior that is considered deviant may only be an expression of a student's culture and social outlook. It is important to be factual, reasonable, and brief when discussing discipline problems with disruptive youth. As a group they cannot tolerate deceipt or unreasonableness, and view long explanations as signs of defensive behavior. Inservice training for administrators and teachers can make them more sensitive to the problems and needs of disruptive youth. The committee recommends compulsory in-service training for all teachers and administrators in order to better deal with the problems of disruptive youth.

4. In-School Suspensions.

The in-school suspension program has been tried in many ways in various parts of the country. Most are designed to retain students in a structured school environment after an infraction of a rule which would normally remove the student from the school premises. Most of the more progressive in-school suspension programs require the student to continue his academic work during the suspension period. That facet of the program represents a basic difference between the normal suspension procedure and the in-school suspension procedure.

The committee recognizes the financial difficulties the Board must face in preparing the 1975/1976 budget. With full knowledge of that fact, the Citizens Advisory Subcommittee on Disruptive Youth asks that the Board give the highest consideration and priority to a program of in-school suspensions for all high schools in the County and that students' in-school suspension be required to have personal or group counseling to find the cause of behavior that led to the suspension.

5. An Expansion of the Type of Program Found at the Dorothy Thomas Facility.

The Dorothy Thomas school offers an alternative program for students who are unable to cope with the normal school environment. The majority of the 135 children at that facility range in age from 7 to 17 and are emotionally disturbed. Some are socially maladjusted and have been described as misfits in the normal classroom setting. Most children remain about a year and have difficulty in reading and math. They get a minimum of fifteen minutes of individualized tutoring per day. Vocational programs such as agriculture, business, construction, home economics, and general shop are very popular at the facility. Most of the students return home in the evening, but there are thirty-two fulltime residents.

The program is cooperatively funded by the Hillsborough County Commission and the Hillsborough County School Board. The County Commission provides buildings and equipment, and the School Board provides thirteen teacher units, lunchroom personnel, books, and instructional supplies. The annual budget is $120,000.

The children are referred by the Division of Youth Services or the Hillsborough County School System on about a fifty-fifty basis. This program adds to the available alternatives for disruptive youth, and the Citizen Advisory Subcommittee on Disruptive Youth recommends that the idea be expanded in order that more youngsters may receive these services.

Caution should be taken to insure that guidelines for referral to such programs be uniformly and rigidly followed to insure that the program is not used as a punitive measure or abused in other ways. Additional care should be taken to insure that pupils are kept in such programs only as long as necessary.

6. An investigation of suspension and expulsions by the School Board.

In light of recent charges of racial discrimination in suspensions and expulsions leveled against schools, it is proposed that the Citizen Advisory Committee recommend that the school administration or the Board investigate current suspension and expulsion policies and make some public statement on the matter to clarify the true picture. It is further recommended that in-school suspensions be used in place of out-of-school suspensions whenever and wherever possible. This matter appears serious enough to warrant action since it is consistent with national findings that black student suspensions are far out of line with the ratio of black-white students enrolled in public schools. Should no such action be taken, it will be to the detriment of good school-community relations, especially in the black community.

APPENDIX B

Letter From Region IV (Atlanta)

Office Of Civil Rights

to

Hillsborough County Schools

December 4, 1975

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Room 10

December 4, 1975

Dr. Raymond Shelton
Superintendent
Hillsborough County Schools
County Courthouse
Post Office Box 3408
Tampa, Florida 33601

Dear Dr. Shelton:

RE: Complaint IV-75-39A

Thank you and your staff for the courtesy and cooperation extended to members of our staff during the recent on-site review. As you know, one area of concern during the visit was the complaint filed with this office alleging race discrimination in your district's disciplinary practices. It was determined that minority students are suspended and expelled from schools as a disciplinary measure more frequently and for longer periods of time than white students.

During the review a random sample was extracted from five junior high schools; Horace Mann, B.T. Washington, Adams, Buchanon and Monroe and one high school, H.B. Plant. The sample included 10 percent of all students referred for disciplinary actions during the 1974-75 school year. Information for all schools was submitted as requested, however, copies of records from Horace Mann Junior High School were not readable, therefore, these were not included in our analysis.

The data were analyzed according to the offenses specified on the referral records. These were as follows: fighting, skipping, truancy, tardiness, disrespect, disturbance, profanity, dress, no assignment, assault, stealing, smoking, and drinking. The analysis covered all actions taken in handling the disciplinary referrals.

Minority students accounted for 13.5 percent of the total student population at the schools sampled but 62 percent of the referrals. They also accounted for 69 percent of the suspensions and received 74 percent of the days meted out. The average suspension for a black student was five (5) days as compared to 3.9 days for a white student.

It appears that in all of the schools, disciplinary sanctions were meted out in an arbitrary and inconsistent manner. However, only one school, Monroe Junior High, showed a pattern by the actions taken, which would indicate possible discrimination.

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In the analysis, four categories are conditioned upon an administrator's subjective interpretation of the regulations. These are as follows: tardiness, disrespect, disturbance and profanity. In each of these categories, Monroe showed that black students were referred, paddled and suspended more often than white students in the school as well as in the other schools sampled. Black students were also the recipients of more days meted out for suspensions. For example, in the area of "disrespect" black students received an average of 9.7 days for suspensions compared to 4.5 days given to white students. It was also indicated that more alternatives to suspensions, such as conferences, or work detail, were used when dealing with white students, than with black students. Fifty percent of white students' problems were resolved by conference only as compared to 25 percent of the black students.

Other information supplied by the district showed that the district has had in operation since 1970, a human relations program. Two of the program's objectives were to enhance race relations and serve as a liaison between the school and community. While this program may be very useful and the objectives very worthwhile, there is no evidence of its effectiveness in resolving related problems in the area of discipline. Meaningful and cooperative communications between the school system and concerned community organizations, such as the NAACP appeared to be nonexistent. It appears, therefore, that a redirection of this program's procedures and efforts in terms of its stated objectives could possibly represent at least a part of the remedy for the now existing problems. As a beginning for such actions, it appears that the sensitivity type of activites outlined for the program need to be re-enforced for personnel involved on the junior high level, particularly at the school in question.

Because the Department has determined that your district's policies have a discriminatory impact on minority students, your district should provide an affirmative action plan which indicates that positive steps will be taken to alleviate these areas of concern. Such a plan should have long term and interim goals and its effectiveness should be evaluated periodically. Also, in your planning of possible remedies, we suggest that you consider the following recommendations:

1. In regard to the communications problem, we suggest that involvement of community resources should provide valuable assistance in the planning and implementing stages of possible remedies. Utilizing these people should be a more effective means of establishing better communication between the schools and the community.

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2. The school board and administrators should re-examine the disciplinary exclusion policies and apply these only to offenses that are dangerous or pose a threat of imminent harm to persons and property. Officials should redefine with more sensitivity the behavior and punishment standards for the schools. Many offenses which are currently grounds for suspension should merit some other type of in-school discipline or action. Examples are tardiness, truancy, and smoking.

3. Teachers, particularly first year teachers, should be offered training in handling children with discipline problems. There were several minor incidents for which students were referred to the dean's office that could have been resolved by the classroom teacher.

4. Suspensions should be the very last resort for all offenses. School officials should have the responsibility to show that they have exhausted every less drastic means to correct a child's discipline problem before any exclusion.

The above procedures are provided as suggestions, however, the implementation of these or similar procedures will constitute a positive step in the direction of providing for the equal and nondiscriminatory treatment of your students. We would appreciate a report of your plans to remedy the situation within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter.

As previously mentioned this letter is addressed only to the complaint issue. Communications concerning other areas covered on the review, the programs for students whose home language is other than English and the program for the educable mentally handicapped, will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter and if you have any questions, please contact us.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Thomas, Director
Office for Civil Rights (Region IV)

cc: Chief State School Officer

APPENDIX C

Letters Of Request For Technical Assistance

to the

Florida School Desegregation Consulting Center

from the

Citizens' Advisory Committee

and

Superintendent of Schools

and

Replies from the Center

necessary to insure that they continue to be applied fairly; (2) how students may be made fully aware of procedures and policies dealing with suspension; (3) how discipline may be handled to insure consistency within and among the secondary schools in Hillsborough County; (4) if the suspension procedures are effective in dealing with student violations; (5) if exceptions should be made by school personnel in considering individual student situations, and how exceptions may be best handled.

The second major thrust or objective of the study would be to provide alternative disciplinary measures for student disciplinary violations and remedies for correcting any of the problems unearthed in the study.

Sincerely,

Garth R. Drewry

Garth R. Drewry, Chairman
Citizen Advisory Committee

GD/mr

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
P. O. BOX 3408 TAMPA, FLORIDA 33601
(813) 223-2311

SCHOOL BOARD
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HUGO SCHMIDT

RAYMOND O. SHELTON
Superintendent of Schools

OFFICE: COUNTY COURT HOUSE

April 5, 1976

Dr. Gordon Foster
Florida School Desegregation
Consulting Center
School of Education
University of Miami
Coral Gables, Florida 33124

Dear Dr. Foster:

At the March 23 Hillsborough County School Board meeting, the Board asked the Citizen Advisory Committee to study the secondary student suspension issue to determine what modifications or alternatives may be suggested to possibly reduce the number of suspensions and improve the suspension process. I am aware that the Citizen Advisory Committee has requested assistance from the Florida School Desegregation Consulting Center, and I concur with their request.

Thank you for your continued interest in Hillsborough County, and I would appreciate any assistance you could provide us with this difficult problem.

Sincerely,

Raymond O. Shelton
Superintendent

ROS/mr

florida school desegregation consulting center

May 13, 1976

Dr. Raymond O. Shelton
Superintendent
Hillsborough County Public Schools
P. O. Box 3208
Tampa, Florida 33601

Your letter of April 5 concerning a study of secondary student suspension issues in Hillsborough County has been received. I have met on two occasions with Dr. Sickles, Mr. Bing, and members of the Citizen Advisory Committee to consider substantive matters of the contemplated study and procedures.

We are delighted to take on this assignment and trust our participation can be helpful. It is my understanding we will work directly with Dr. Sickles and the Advisory Committee as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Gordon Foster
Director

GF/cig

cc: Dr. Walter Sickles, Administrative Assistant

university of miami / school of education / post office box 248065 / coral gables, florida / 33124
(305) 284-3213

florida school desegregation consulting center

May 17, 1976

Mr. Garth R. Drewry, Chairperson
Citizens Advisory Committee
Hillsborough County Public Schools
P.O. Box 3408
Tampa, Florida 33601

Dear Mr. Drewry:

Thank you for your letter of April 7 concerning the possibility of a Center study relative to disciplinary practices generally in the Hillsborough County Schools and more particularly to secondary student suspensions.

As you know, I have met on two occasions with administrators from the schools and persons on your committee to discuss the detailed substance of such a study and possible procedures for carrying it forward.

This is to let you know that we will be delighted to undertake the study and trust the engagement will be a mutually rewarding one. We have always maintained a good working relationship with Hillsborough school people and intend to continue doing so. As we move along I will work through Dr. Sickles in keeping in touch with you and members of your committee.

Sincerely,

Gordon Foster
Director

GF:psk
enclosure

cc: Dr. Ray Shelton, Superintendent
Dr. Walter Sickles, Administrative Assistant

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